**NORTHCENTRAL UNIVERSITY**

**ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET**

# Learner: Thomas E. Lambright, Jr. Assignment # 2

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| ELT7008-2 | Dr. Kat Assignment # 1 |

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| Hello Dr.Gatin,  This particular assignment gave me the opportunity to distinguish between the online community and the face-to-face classroom community. I was also able to use at least three references and resources with this activity to support the differences of the online learning community from the face-to-face learners.  **Faculty Use Only**  <Faculty comments here>  <Faculty Name> <Grade Earned> <Writing Score> <Date Graded>  The Electronic Learning Community  Thomas E. Lambright, Jr.  Northcentral University This assignment analyzes the electronic learning community. At the present time, the year of 2011, online learning and online communities are growing and developing several instructional strategies to improve the delivery of e-Learning (Pozzi & Persico, 2011). The online learning community appeals to full-time working professionals like me who are not able to meet in a bricks and mortar classroom at the traditional classroom instructional times. It is of interest to note that not all online learning communities are 100% online. Some online communities offer a 50/50 split of online and traditional face-to-face instructions. Another important difference between face-to-face instruction and online learning is that online communities can differentiate their learning and teaching strategies using technology in order to help the online learner differentiate knowledge (Smith, G., & Throne, S., 2009). When it comes to the application of technology in the classroom, the differences between the face-to-face classroom community and the online community are clearly seen in the learning process. When we consider the traditional classroom setting, one may envision a classroom of students together. There is a time for interaction and dialogue similar to the online community. However there is a difference with the online community because they do not have access to face to face conversation. The ground school of learning provides face-to-face conversation which allows for peers to hear the tone variations as well as see the facial expressions. The features of tone, pitch and visual facial clues adds to the meaning of peer to peer conversations. The disadvantage in this regards for the online community of learners is that tones, pitch and facial clues are missing in communication .As a result of this missing dialogue readers may misinterpret the message of the presenter. There is a solution, of course, to the online community’s lack of tone, pitch and visuals. In fact the traditional learning community usually does not implement this useful online learning strategy implemented by online learners. This strategy is called the discussion thread. In my opinion the discussion thread for the online community provides an opportunity for all to participate and feel a part of the online learning community when the questions are engaging for the learners (Conrad, & Donaldson, 2004).  There are also differences between the online learning community leadership roles and the traditional ground school leadership roles within the classroom. The face-to-face learners traditionally seek the instructor for leadership of tasks and at times for solutions. This is referred by some as the teacher centered classroom. Recently, current learning strategies encourage student centered learning for both online and face-to-face learning. The difference in current learning strategies is the method in which online and face-to-face learners apply these strategies. For example, the online learners who wish to incorporate a team of learner with a leader for a specific task must first establish who would be the best leader for the group. I would imagine that the process of identifying the leader in the group is a much slower process for the online learner in comparison to face-to-face learners. The online learners would first need to take turns establishing the qualifications of each other and next voting on the most qualified leader. An experienced instructor will provide not only the assignment for a team effort group but criteria for the leadership role of the team. Face-to-face groups can simple talk about their expertise and back up this experience with a quick demonstration of what they can do in a leadership role. The face-to-face instructor can simply have the various team chose a team leader within a 10-15 minute time frame. The online learners may require one to three days to get this task done since in many cases this online assignment will be asynchronous to meet the online learner’s flexible school schedule. In addition, the length of time may be contributed by the length of time it will take each online learner to cast their vote for a team leader. The voting process on who would be the better leader is also much faster due to the tone, pitch and facial expressions of the face-to-face method .This is where the instructional role of the online facilitator comes in handy. The online facilitator may need to have creativity for developing task assignments for the online learner (Watkins, 2005). In addition, the face-to-face assignments are done on a specific time bases. The online assignment such as research assignments can be done asynchronously allowing the flexibility of various learners’ schedules, thus lengthen the assignments due date. This would also mean that the online teacher’s instructional skills set will be different for the online learner in comparison to the traditional face-to-face instructional leader. I believe that the online instructor would need to have a greater detailed lesson plan for the online course in comparison to the face-to-face classroom where the instructor can provide verbal instructions.  Online learners may experience physical problems as a result of using the internet. Some of those problems may include headaches, pains to the neck and lower back as well as a computer related problem know as carpal tunnel syndrome (Butler, 1996). The face-to-face classroom generally does not spend several hours a day in front of a computer or laptop. In addition, there is not the same demand when it comes to typing with the face-to-face classroom setting in comparison to the online community. Another interesting difference is that when the online learner is tuned out and not focusing on the lesson it is not always evident, after all who really sees this unfocused individual. It is possible that one to two weeks can fly by without anyone actually noticing the unfocused online individual missing from the discussion threads. If this individual is working on a team, it is important to notice that the absence can have a profound effect on the team grade as a whole. Another team member will need to step up to the plate again to make up the missing work. Many online professors will give an individual grade as well as a team grade to show appreciation of individual work which is completed.  In some cases the learner using an online community may find greater success than the face-to-face classroom community. The reason for this observation is that those who are introverted in their personality type will feel at ease communicating with a computer as opposed to a fearful face-to-face experience (Pratt, 1996).  The instructor’s role in facilitating the development of an online community is different than the traditional ground learning classroom. The online facilitator task in my opinion is more challenging compared to the face-to-face instruction. The online facilitator will need to make sure that all learners participate by means of required written response to assignments. The face-to-face learners can be considered a participant by simply providing a short verbal response. In my opinion, the written response of the learner provides a more in-depth understanding of the assignment in comparison to the short verbal response of the face-to-face learner. Some additional challenges to the online facilitator that need to be taken into consideration is the human factor of fears of technology integration whether real or imagined (Palloff, Pratt, 2007).These potential “fears” need to be addressed in the early stages of the course. For example, I was comforted in knowing that Dr. Glen Gatin mentor and instructional professor at Northcentral University reached out to the learners by not only introducing himself to new learners but also making sure that additional ways of communication with him, other than just the discussion thread, were made available. The online instructor will need to be diligent in keeping abreast of the learners within the class. The online learning community professor loses out with the lack of face-to-face communication and therefore must stay alert to problems which may arise within the group in regards to team members who are not holding their share of work assignments which require a team effort (Palloff, & Pratt, 2005) Interestingly, Dr. Gatin addressed this need by means of using the program *Skype* which brings into account facial expressions, tones and pitch.  In summary, when we analyze the electronic learning community in comparison to the face-to-face community we see clear differences in the learning process. Personal observations of both worlds indicate that the online learners must be diligent in the written expression to avoid miscommunication of thought. The face-to-face learner has the enhanced communication factors of pitch, tone and facial expressions to convey thought. The online instructor must keep in mind the challenges of “limited” online communication and enhance student learning (Bender, 2003).  References  Bender, T. (2003). *Discussion-based online teaching to enhance student learning: Theory, practice*  *and assessment.* Sterling, Virginia: Stylus Publishing.  Butler, S. (1996). *Conquering carpal tunnel syndrome and other repetitive strain injuries*. Oakland,  CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.  Conrad, R., & Donaldson, J. 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